

INAUGURAL ADDRESS ~ January 3, 2012
THE HONORABLE THOMAS P. KOCH
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF QUINCY
MASSACHUSETTS

Reverend Clergy, Members of the City Council, School Committee Members, Congressman Lynch, Majority Leader Mariano and Members of our State Delegation, Treasurer Grossman, Auditor Bump, Justice Coven, Mayor Phelan, Mayor Sheets, Mayor McCauley, Mayor Tobin, Mayor LaRaia and Mayor Hannon, Department Heads, City Workers, Union Leaders, Business Community Leaders, Mr. Erikson and all Veterans, Citizens of Quincy.

I stand here before you tonight humbled and privileged to be your Mayor. Mayor of the greatest City in the Commonwealth – made great by its rich history and its diversity of people. I am proud – proud of what we have endured, what we have accomplished and what we will do together as a community. And I am grateful – grateful to my colleagues in government, elected officials, Department Heads, City Employees, Members of Boards and Commissions, Service organizations, spiritual leaders and our business and labor leaders, for your commitment to the citizens of Quincy.

Let me take a moment to thank those who have served with us working for a better Quincy.

Senator John Keenan: we thank you for your service to our city as a city councilor. As Chairman of the Finance Committee you helped me balance fiscal foresight with fiscal transparency. Your leadership will be missed, John, best wishes to you as you represent our city in the Massachusetts State Senate.

Commissioner Dan Raymondi: we thank you for your service to our city as a city councillor and school committee member, bringing your energy, knowledge and talent to help our City, never forgetting why we do this. I would point out that since Dan has been Commissioner it has not yet snowed.

School Committee Member Jo-Ann Bragg: I am sorry to see you go, we are grateful for your hard work and leadership on so many educational issues over the last sixteen years. You and your family are in our thoughts and prayers.

School Committee Member Elaine Dwyer: We are so grateful to your dedication to the children of our City.

To those who are newly elected to office, Welcome! Ward 2 Councillor Brad Croall and Ward 5 Councillor Kirsten Hughes; you follow in the footsteps of hardworking and dedicated councillors. I have every confidence you will be up to the task and I look forward to working with you.

Paul Bregoli and Kathy Hubley, I look forward to working with you and the entire school committee as we continue to prepare our young people for life's challenges. The enthusiasm and fresh eyes you bring to our work is most welcome.

President Theodore Roosevelt said,

“The Credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dirt and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly; errs and comes short again and again; who knows great enthusiasm, great devotion, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at best knows the triumph of –

HIGH ACHIEVEMENT; and who, at the worst, if he fails, fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

As I reflect upon those historic words, I believe that we, our community, are in the arena together. Our devotion is indeed great and our cause worthy. And I know with all my heart that by continuing to work together, we will further know the triumph of high achievement.

OUR CAUSE IS HIGH ACHIEVEMENT IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROVIDING JOBS AND OPPORTUNITY.

With the opening of the Walter J. Hannon Parkway, the redevelopment of Quincy Center is now a reality. This year, we will continue to move forward on the task of permitting, designing and constructing the vital infrastructure that will be the foundation for thousands of new jobs; for 1.6 billion dollars of investment and millions of dollars in new revenue for the City. In the coming months, construction will begin to restore the Town Brook through downtown, a critical component of our development plan and a substantial, tangible result of the work of the last four years by so many people to create what is the most aggressive development plan in the Northeast.

Together with our partners at Street-Works, new investors will join us at the table as we continue to attract private capital that will drive our plan forward. I remain committed that you will see the first rising steel of our new downtown in 2013. It will not be easy, there will be challenges and there will always be those who say it can not or should not be done, but let us be clear, we are engaged in a worthy cause.

The promise of economic opportunity must – and does – extend beyond Quincy Center. Last year, working together with the City Council and a volunteer task force, we instituted the first major overhaul of our City’s zoning code in a generation, allowing us to meet our commitment to protect our neighborhoods while at the same time directing development to the right places. In the coming year, we will build upon that work by creating the zoning and permitting framework – as we did in downtown – to attract new investment in both Wollaston Center and Norfolk Downs.

Working in close collaboration with our Chamber of Commerce, we will launch a major campaign to attract the growing bio-tech industry to Quincy; we will continue to work with our friends at the Crown Colony Office Park, Fore River Shipyard and other appropriate locations across the City to provide the incentives and the cooperation necessary to capitalize on Quincy’s immense economic potential. Construction will occur in many areas, and I remain committed to doing everything in my power to provide Quincy jobs for Quincy people.

OUR CAUSE IS HIGH ACHIEVEMENT IN EDUCATION.

As a community, we have no greater responsibility than to provide the tools for our childrens’ future, and that future is embodied by the health, growth and success of the Quincy Public Schools. Even amid the most challenging economic times since the Great Depression, the School Committee, our Superintendent and his leadership team have remained focused on the classroom. Our school system is strong, but it must be continually made stronger, and our administration is committed to providing the investment required to keep the Quincy Public Schools among the best school systems in the Commonwealth.

Our teachers are the heart of our school system, their work in the classroom is impossible to overstate. We can all agree about the need for standards and assessments for our students. But let us never underestimate the personal connection our teachers make with students on a daily basis. It is these relationships – and the work of teachers to mentor, encourage and tap the creativity of children that is the most vital part of the classroom, and our work must live up to those ideals.

Our responsibility to our educators and our children extends beyond the classroom to the school buildings that are among our most important public assets. This year, we will see the beginning of construction on a new Central Middle School after more than 30 years of talk. We will make the same commitment to our taxpayers on this project as we did with this beautiful building – the new Central Middle School will be built on time and on budget.

Providing a functional and safe learning environment for our children does not mean just building new schools – it means investing in the schools that already exist. This year, we will be completing more than 3 million dollars in roof repairs to school buildings across the City, and my administration is committed to continue making these kinds of vital investments in our public assets.

OUR CAUSE IS HIGH ACHIEVEMENT IN PUBLIC SAFETY.

Our firefighters and police officers risk their own safety every day to provide secure neighborhoods and the peace of mind for residents that comes with knowledge that hard-working and highly trained public safety departments are only a phone call away. It is our responsibility to provide the necessary resources and investment to ensure these brave men and women can do their job. As a result of careful financial management, this year we are able to add both police officers and firefighters, bolstering our ranks.

We must continue to face our challenges. Four years ago, I stood before you to announce a first-of-its-kind task force in an effort to battle the growing problem of substance abuse in our City. While we've enjoyed many successes – the hard work of our Police Department has resulted in dramatic increases in drug arrests, new partnerships with state and federal authorities and dozens of lives saved by anti-overdose treatments –we must acknowledge that the challenge remains. We have much more work to do, and in the coming year, we will expand the drug task force's role, enhance our partnerships with Sheriff Bellotti and District Attorney Morrissey and other agencies, improve educational programs and continue to tackle this problem head-on together as a community.

In our Fire Department, there is no nothing more important than providing the adequate tools and equipment these devoted first responders need to provide the life-saving services, which is at the core of their mission, and to ensure they can do their jobs safely. As part of our Capital Improvement Plan, we will take delivery this month of a new ladder truck as part of our effort to update our fleet of apparatus.

Whatever our challenges, we will always meet our responsibility to the public safety of our residents.

OUR CAUSE IS HIGH ACHIEVEMENT IN PUBLIC SERVICES.

Let me say that I appreciate the value of our public employees. Whether it's the van driver taking a senior to a medical appointment, the Veterans' Service office working closely with our returning servicemen and women to ease their reentry to civilian life, a laborer building a new sidewalk or lining a ballfield for a new season, the librarian who introduces the child to the wonderful world of books, or the building inspector who takes the time to guide the first-time home owner through the construction

process. We cannot ignore the value of this work, and we will continue to protect those services our residents expect and deserve.

Those services include our Capital Improvement Plan and the millions of dollars of long-overdue flood relief projects, seawall repairs, road and sidewalk reconstruction and water and sewer replacements. These projects are possible not through a large increase in spending, but rather a defined plan that meets our challenges in an affordable and aggressive way.

We will continue to explore new efficiencies, cost-savings and creative solutions to our problems, as we did with reforms in our snow removal operation, employee health care reform and wage freezes. Let us also be mindful that our City workers have been with us each step of the way, making sacrifices and accepting changes that have saved this City tens of millions of dollars and hundreds of jobs.

OUR CAUSE IS MEETING OUR CHALLENGES TO OUR ENVIRONMENT.

I am proud of our work that recently led to the formal designation of Quincy as a Green Community by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a determination of our environmental commitment achieved by only a few cities our size and one that now qualifies Quincy for nearly \$400,000 in grant money. As part of our designation, the City has committed to a goal of a 20 percent reduction in energy use over the next five years. This is challenging but attainable.

As part of our effort, we will embark on a bold plan – at no cost to the City – to install solar panels on a number of municipal buildings this year. Our ongoing overhaul of our sewer systems continues to produce cost-savings and pollution reduction. We do this work mindful that it is our responsibility to

leave this City to our children and our grandchildren clean, green and prepared to meet the energy demands of the future.

When history judges our deeds, let it be said that we were in the arena, that we met our challenges with courage and that we forged ahead with creativity and conviction. Ladies and gentlemen, we will continue to meet the needs of our citizens and lay the foundation for prosperity – and the triumph of high achievement – for our children and grandchildren.

Let us continue working together striving valiantly with great enthusiasm and devotion; for ours is a worthy cause.

God Bless you and God Bless the great City of Quincy.